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STRICTURES

UPON THE

UNION

BETWEEN

GREAT BRITAIN

AND

IRELAND.

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BY CAPTAIN CHARLES KERR,

OF THE ROXBURGHSHIRE LT. DRAGOONS.

Particularly detailing the Advantages derived to Scotland, from her UNION with England, and defending the Character of those who brought forward a Measure so beneficial to their Country, against the scurrilous attacks of certain Pamphleteers of the present day.

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STRICTURES, &c.

FROM an object of so momentuous importance, as an Union between Great Britain and Ireland; he indeed must be endued with more than common apathy, who can turn with indifference—It commands the attention of every rank in society; nor is the situation of any so despicable, as not to be affected by its probable consequences.—And in truth I have little reason to suppose, that it lies neglected; the subject seems already debated with a keenness equal to its merits. It has been laid before the public in every guise which, either good sense, fancy, interest or acri-

mony could bestow upon it ; and however inadequate I may be to throw new light upon a subject, upon all sides so ably contested : I at least have the merit of entering the field, as disinterested, and unprejudiced, as any of those champions who have preceded me.

In a contest of this kind, which necessarily involves so many jarring interests ; it may naturally, be expected that, the views, the wishes, the situations of individuals, will be apt to throw a false colouring upon the picture. The shades of life are various, the interests of mankind no less extended, and the mind so apt to flatter our selfish speculations, as the ebullitions of patriotism ; that it is little to be wondered at, that men equally interested for the good of their country, should see that good to be obtained through such opposite mediums ;—should indulge their spleen at the expence of their judgment ;—and pursue the object of their wishes, by
whatever

whatever means, either wit, learning, or political prejudice may prompt them to. Such speculations should therefore be listened to with diffidence, and he whose tone is most decided, is least of all to be trusted. The wisdom of a Senate might even here hesitate with ~~propriety~~ ^{propriety}. I shall proceed with caution; 'tis perhaps my only recommendation to the attention of the public.

Before ballancing the mutual advantages of a Union betwixt Great Britain and Ireland, as the expediency of such a measure is denied *in toto*, let me upon that preliminary point, say a few words in the first place.

Those who oppose such an Union make use of one of these two arguments: either that this is not the proper time for intruding such a political innovation upon the rights of the Irish nation, when the spirits of men are already sufficiently fer-

mented by recent transactions in the kingdom;—or, that a Union of Ireland with Great Britain, can never take place, but at the expence of the independence of the former, and the consequent aggrandizement of the latter state.

To argue, that this is not the proper time, for bringing such a measure before the public eye, is tacitly allowing that, at some future period it might be acquiesced in with advantage:—But at present the situation of this kingdom, forbids such an attempt. Behold a country scarce breathing from the ravages of civil fury, its fields died with the blood of its inhabitants, its villages depopulated, its harvests laid waste; the seeds of jealousy germinating in every bosom; and party distinctions courting every claim that, can foster and promote the spirit of revenge.—The picture is awful; and I am much afraid, that should we solely trust to the hand of time, to soften the foreground of such

such a landscape, that those radical evils, which have been the origin of all the miseries of this country, would take a root so deep, so widely branched, as no laws, no policy, human or divine, not even self interest itself, but must fail to check the growth of those disorders, which have already deluged this unhappy country, in civil warfare. The sources of these evils are many ;—they are however principally to be found, in the party feuds of protestant and catholic ; in the unlimited tyranny of the greater over the smaller tenants ;—and from absentees trusting entirely the concern, the welfare, the very being of the poor cottager, to the arbitrary dominion—yes, sometimes, to the illegal exactions of a self-interested, cunning, pitiful agent. That these remarks are by no means novel, I shall readily grant :—that they are evils existing at the present moment who can deny ?—evils fostered by the hand of prejudice, supported by custom, countenanced perhaps from necessity. If recognized
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by the public as the great source of these drawbacks upon the prosperity of Ireland, 'tis indifferent how often the remark be made, if a remedy be not applied. And where is that remedy to be found? In a Union, I reply—In a Union, so closely linked, that those stubborn fetters, which the wisdom of government hath so fast interwoven, a similitude of manners, an interchange of mutual benefits, a necessity arising from past events, may rivet still closer together. 'Tis upon such grounds that my hypothesis rests, nor in any part of my argument, shall I ever lose sight of them.

Whilst the government of Ireland remains upon its present footing, I shall readily grant that it would be dangerous to enter fully into the claims of the Roman Catholics. If it is necessary for the well being of this state, that the Protestant interest should bear a decided superiority; restrictions upon Roman Catholics must still continue. I feel that I do not grant too much when I avow,
that

that even the welfare of Great Britain itself depends upon so momentous a measure. But change the question—should an Union take place, are such restrictions requisite?—By no means.—The political views of Ireland are extended. It has Great Britain for its range : and granting that you were to allow the Roman Catholics complete emancipation, how in such a case could that effect the Parliament of Great Britain, or the Protestant possessions in Ireland?—The representation of the kingdom in point of numbers being diminished, there probably would be so decided a superiority in favour of those leading characters, who aspired to that honour, as to bear down every attempt at opposition ; political feuds would then be diminished—their effects at least transferred to a more distant quarter would be less sensibly felt, and in time every sense of injury would vanish, and harmony would succeed. If my hypothesis is true, what time so urgent as the present for bringing forward a measure, which

which will heal these wounds, at the price of a few privileges to the Roman Catholics of Ireland; and what the Protestants will not feel themselves interested to deny them. Wounds, which bleeding as they are at present from every pore, and planting the seeds of future rebellion, in minds open both to injury and revenge, are the more liable to be healed by impressions of gratitude, and that too at a time, when least expected. Grant me for one moment, that my arguments are good, who then will dare to deny, that the Union of the Roman Catholics of Ireland with the Protestant interest would not promote the prosperity of the kingdom? Are restrictions upon three-fourths of any society, the true mode of advancing its welfare? Where is the bud that will expand under the rod of the oppressor? The genius which blossoms only under the fostering hand of indulgence, will sicken and die if unprotected—if limits be chained to hope, and if the unfettered mind must be goaded by restrictions, which
neither

neither interest can remove, nor the brightest talents ameliorate.

It would be entering too deeply into the agricultural state of this kingdom, to explain at large, the many abuses originating from the mode too generally practised in leasing lands—I shall not dwell upon those evils resulting from the vast extent of farms so generally found in many districts of this country, a subject, rather the duty of a statistical observer, than the writer of an essay of this nature. I shall more particularly confine myself to the mode, in which leases are granted, which with regard to political effects merits every attention. I allude to the state of the real farmers of Ireland, as distinguished from the middle men. These occupying tenants, are a set of men, to whose labour and industry society owes most—a set of men who owe least to their country—to whom oppression is no stranger, and who to gain independence, must pass through an ordeal, that I must confess,

an Irishman alone would have patience to attempt. To draw the picture of calamity is at no time pleasing. If to paint oppression in the glowing colours of a feeling mind, would be here necessary—who is ignorant of what I would wish to describe? the animated impulse of every honest heart, has long ere now beat with correspondent feelings, wished to point out the remedy, and sickened to think that, a custom so universal, must trust a good deal to the hand of time and experience for an effectual remedy. Yet I should be stiled a mere declaimer, and perhaps might merit the reproach were I to stop here—since I have ventured upon the subject, it is my duty to explain myself more fully. The middle men of Ireland are those who with propriety may be defined “upstart gentlemen”—who, generally speaking, have much confidence, many pretensions, and little humanity:—who think for themselves alone, regard the little tenant as their property, consider every scheme excusable to which profit

fit is annexed, and yet resort not to those modes of industry, by which these profits might be justifiably doubled. These are the men, who are the curse of every country in which they are known: but who are no where recognised, as a distinct class of individuals, except where agriculture is at its lowest verge. To every general rule there must be exceptions—to this I know many; and yet, I believe my picture will be recognized, as just in the outline. Against universal habit, the legislature is no safeguard; the laws of this country are admirable; but in how many instances has precept preceded example?—The time however approaches, when even absentees will recognize the injustice they do themselves and their country, from leasing such extensive districts to individuals, with power to lord it over some thousands of poor occupiers of that soil, upon which the intermidate tenant has perhaps never bestowed one hours labour, one sixpence to ameliorate, or one thought—but to harass the

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the industrious cultivator and his helpless family. Will not the worm even rise against you if trampled upon? who then shall wonder to observe seditious principles swallowed by an ignorant, a deluded multitude, to whom in many cases, *hereafter*, define it as you may, would be preferable to his present existence. Thank God the time is at hand, (I flatter myself I am not mistaken) when a Union with Great Britain, pointing out so many incentives to industry, so many channels of wealth, and casting suddenly aside the veil of prejudice, must expand the native genius and humanity of Irishmen; and teach them that they now can boast of resources within themselves, which but to cultivate, must make them rise superior to what, even twenty years ago, it would have been considered a hyperbole to look up to.

The consequences resulting from absences are perhaps none of the least of those hardships complained of, not so much to
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the country at large from their withdrawing from its circulation, so great a capital as the rents of their properties ; as to individuals, from the want of that source of happiness, which they would experience more immediately, under the countenance of a kind landlord. How many men are there, who blest with the noblest spirit of philanthropy, could, from the dictates of their own heart, find an easy, a certain remedy to many evils, which are unattended to by those who have neither interest to induce, or compassion to point out a remedy ? evils, which in many instances, I am convinced, are sufficiently grounded to warrant redress—which, were they even visionary, the soothing, the persuasive voice of a compassionate landlord, could, by humouring, easily blot out by a smile, in place of their being turned into real hardships by the humours of an unfeeling agent.—Were the mode in which the rents are levied in many places of this country, attended to by the legislator, a remedy might be found for

for much of the discontent which pervades the lower ranks of society in this kingdom. Did the great proprietors of land listen to their own interest, they would sometimes recollect what Bacon in his *apogthegms*, relates of James the first of England,—“Gentlemen,” said the king, “at London, you are like ships in a sea, which shew like nothing; but in your country villages, you are like ships in a river, which look great things.”—But, says the opposer of the Union, if absentees are at present found a real evil, how much more so must that afterwards be felt, when inducements for emigrating are multiplied, and the impossibility exists of residing beyond that sphere, where profit, honour and riches are alone distributed. In the first place, Scotland experiences the same evil, but there it is made up,—by possessing a free unrestricted commerce with that country, which swallows up so great a proportion of her rents. At present Ireland cannot possibly advert to such a return: her trade

trade with Great Britain being cramped.—
 Did therefore the evil even increase with
 the Union, it would find a remedy within
 itself of the same nature with Scotland.

But even the necessary connection which
 a member of the British legislature must
 keep up berwixt himself and his constitu-
 ents, for the purpose of sustaining his poli-
 tical influence, will render it necessary for
 him to spend part of his time in the coun-
 try. Profit alone will lead him to it, for as
 one of the consequences of a Union an in-
 crease of English capital flowing into this
 kingdom, attended by the example of
 genius, oeconomy, and regularity in farm-
 ing, will of itself create a desire, if not to
 improve in husbandry, at least to make the
 most of the soil : and let any liberal minded
 Irishman examine to what a height that
 improvement might be brought, (particular-
 ly in the province of Connaught,) not even
 carrying the idea to the summit of human
 improvement, yet still it is incalculable.—

Have

Have I strained my argument beyond all probable foresight, by resting it upon such foundations? I hope not.—I have calculated principally upon the justifiable pride and avarice of mankind, nor would it be difficult to find others to support my position.—One author I beg leave to quote upon this subject, the celebrated Arthur Young, who in his tour through Ireland, in the year 1778, makes the following observation upon a Union, and particularly as to the probable effects of the increasing number of absentees.—“ In conversation upon the subject of a Union with Great Britain, I was informed that nothing was so unpopular in Ireland as such an idea, and that the great objection to it was increasing the number of absentees.—When it was in agitation, 20 peers and 60 commoners were talked of to sit in the British Parliament, which would be the residence of 80 of the best estates in Ireland. Going every year to England, would by degrees, make them residents, they

“ they would educate their children there,
 “ and in time become mere absentees :
 “ becoming so, they would be unpopular,
 “ others would be elected, who, treading
 “ in the same steps, would yield the place
 “ still to others ; and thus, by degrees, a
 “ vast portion of the kingdom now resident
 “ would be made absentees : which would,
 “ they think, be so great a drain to
 “ Ireland, that a free trade would not re-
 “ pay it.

“ I think the idea is erroneous, were it
 “ only for one circumstance, the kingdom
 “ would lose, according to this reasoning,
 “ an idle race of country gentlemen, and
 “ in exchange their ports would fill
 “ with ships and commerce, and all the
 “ consequences of commerce : an exchange
 “ that never yet proved disadvantageous
 “ to any country.

Had I not been afraid of becoming
 prolix, I might have dwelt upon subjects
 which,

which, indeed as to their consequence, I have rather hurried over than defined; it is my wish, however, more to furnish matter for others, than to attempt myself what I am little able to execute; and if I have failed in proving the benefits of a Union at the present crisis, it must be entirely owing to the mode in which I have arranged my arguments, not that these arguments in themselves are null and frivolous.

But there are some who contend, that, a Union with Great Britain can at no time take place, but, to the total annihilation of the kingdom of Ireland.—With such, every argument must be unavailing, for even truth itself would fail, were she to descend from above, and dictate to them from the mouth of omnipotence.—To these Gentlemen, I should beg leave to put one question: is not that situation to be preferred, which holds out to men of enterprize, a choice, where formerly there was none?—I pretend not to define, what
may

may be the articles of the treaty betwixt Great Britain and Ireland, but surely without the spirit of prophecy, we may at least foresee, immense commercial advantages resulting to the Irish nation, which must give in particular to the south and west coasts of this island, such benefits, as are hardly calculable!—And is that of little avail, which conduces to call forth the genius and ability of a great nation?—In place of Dublin being the mart for talents, will not Cork, Waterford, Galway, Limerick, all claim their share?—Yes, innumerable little villages upon these coasts, will rise into opulence; if not from mere nonentity, at least from a situation somewhat approaching to it! Much has been said by these Gentlemen, about the insufficiency of Parliament to change the nature of the government,—I pretend not to dive into the mode by which Great Britain may attempt to establish a Union of this nature; but it is at least consistent to suppose, that, should the measure be brought forward by the

British Cabinet,—it can be gained only by those means, which, should the spirit of party, at some future period, think proper to canvass,—would even then, secure the voice of the nation, as constitutional. 'Tis unfair to argue upon a supposed data;—our very principles may be wrong;—What then becomes of our conclusions?

A pamphlet, entitled, “No Union,” famed principally for its scurrility, has ventured, in contradiction to both truth and reason, to commence its career of opposition, by remarking in the first place, the prejudicial effects of the Union upon Scotland. Take this declaimer, in the way he wishes to be understood in,—and Scotland, and her countrymen,—poor, barbarous, and unprincipled, sold themselves for gold; and gained, eternal infamy attached to their character and kingdom; bent under the foot of their oppressor,—and thanked heaven for depriving them, of the smallest chance of arriving, at that
pitch

pitch of civilisation, which, in the natural progress of Europe to refinement, it had once some chance of reaching!—Churchill, Johnson, and Macklin, are that author's three supporters. The first a man of a most infamous character; the second contracting his antipathy to Scotland from Lord Bute's administration; and the third, a buffoon!—Worthy supporters of such a hero!—Ignorance alone must have curtailed the authorities of the learned barrister; for were such satisfactory, he might have indulged his spleen, by a numerous list of supporters, that perhaps might have gained him greater attention. Since therefore, by calling in question, the propriety of the Union of Great Britain as to Scotland, he has attempted to shew to the people of Ireland, the snare that is laid for themselves; I shall briefly narrate those circumstances which gave rise to it, affected it; and is at present the source of happiness to both kingdoms.

From

From the first æra of the English and Scottish monarchy, to the reign of James the fifth, an eternal feud may be said to have existed between the kingdoms; originating in the first place, from jealousy, on the one hand supported by power and riches, on the other, by an independant spirit; in the second place, from private quarrels amongst the boarders.—There were others of less consequence, which gave rise to continual jarrings; and it was even a maxim of the Scottish government, not to accept of too long a truce with England, lest its warlike spirit should be blunted. Whilst England, therefore, in the gradual course of civilization, kept pace with the continental powers;—Scotland, from its poverty and situation, (excluded by England from the benefits of commerce) paused, or at most, very slowly advanced to refinement. Those who are acquainted with the French authors, about the middle of the sixteenth century, may form

form perhaps a comparative idea of the kingdom of Scotland, at that period.

When king James the sixth, was fairly established upon the throne of England,—a Union of both kingdoms was most earnestly sought after by the king; but as Hume wisely observes, in this business “the commons shewed, a greater spirit of independence, than any true judgment of national interest;”—it miscarried, at the same time, with several other measures, which the king had then almost as much at heart.—When the subject was again introduced, in the time of Queen Anne;—it was principally opposed by that party, in the Scots parliament, devoted to the court of St. Germain;—the dukes of Hamilton and Athole, the disappointed leaders of two opposite factions, also secretly attached to that court, and then coalescing through party motives;—and by the leaders of the presbyterian interest; who fearful of a change, in church government,

vernment, co-operated with the puritans, and every sect of dissenters, to frustrate the measure.—It was chiefly through their influence, that such tumults were raised, as had not been witnessed since the revolution;—and if the sum of twenty thousand pounds was upon this occasion *lent* by the queen to the Scottish treasury,—a *loan* so small, will not justify the expression, that the Scots sold their country for gold. The majority of the nation, had already declared in its favor;—every security was given to the presbyterians for the establishment of their form of worship;—and fatal must have been the contest, had arms been resorted to. It may rationally be supposed, that humanity dictated the distribution of such a sum, as a compensation to men, who, either from situation or circumstances, must have been losers by the business; or, who, by their endeavours to promote so beneficial a treaty, merited the reward of their labors. Dr. Smollet writing upon this subject, expresses

ses himself, thus, "The majority of both
 " nations believed that the treaty would
 " produce violent convulsions, or, at
 " best, prove ineffectual. But we now
 " see it has been attended with none of the
 " calamities that were prognosticated;
 " that it quietly took effect, and fully an-
 " swered all the purposes for which it was
 " intended. Hence, we may learn, that
 " many great difficulties are surmounted,
 " because they are not seen by those who
 " direct the execution of any great pro-
 " ject; and that many schemes, which
 " theory deems impracticable, will yet
 " succeed in the experiment."

The foundation of the rebellions, which
 afterwards took place in that kingdom,
 was laid at a period before the Union ex-
 isted. Every source of hope, was then,
 certainly abstracted from the family of
 king James the second:—Yet, we may
 fairly presume, that these rebellions would
 at any rate have occurred, although that

Union never had been heard of.—It now almost amounts to a certainty, that the queen herself was favorable to the cause of her brother;—and a claim at that time so recognized; how can we wonder, that it should afterwards have had so many abettors?—How fondly attached at every period, the Scots have been to the family of Stuart, need not be insisted upon!

But the author of the pamphlet alluded to, has thought proper in a strain of absurd declamation (not unlike the spurious rhetorick, of a French orator of the present day,) to observe, that before three years had elapsed, the treaty of Union was broke, and the passing of the malt tax is brought forward by him, as an instance of what may be expected by the Irish, from any similar treaty. Could he not have also remarked, that by the 20th clause of the Articles of Union, all heretable jurisdictions, &c. were reserved to the owners; yet notwithstanding this treaty,—

treaty,—in the year 1747 an act passed for abolishing them. This though a complete emancipation of the Highlanders, from a badge of feudal servitude;—and although it might be justly argued, that until then, the Scots had acquired no individual freedom, and but a partial advantage from the treaty;—yet, according to that author's mode of reasoning, being in breach of a law passed 40 years before, no allowance was to be made for consequences, unforeseen, when that clause was under deliberation. Why did he not also remark, that in the year 1708—when an invasion of Scotland by the Pretender was expected,—A bill was brought into the House of Lords, under the title of an act for improving the Union of the two kingdoms, relative to trials for high treason in Scotland, which with some small variations, were in future to be regulated, according to the manner of the English proceedings. Both of them were complete infractions of the Union; yet I shall take it

it upon me to say, the constitution so far from being undermined, was supported by them; and had not the treaty been broke, the kingdom of Great Britain must have been endangered.—As to the passing the bill for the malt tax, and the consequent movement of another, for dissolving the Union, it may justly be observed that the spirit of opposition more than any other circumstance was the author of the measure; and how do I support this?—but by observing, that all the Whig Members voted for the dissolution of that treaty, which they had so eagerly promoted—whilst the Tories, strenuously supported the measure, against which they had once argued with such vehemence. In setting forth all the complaints brought at this time by the Scotch against the British government in consequence of the violation of the Union,—Mr. Spencer in his pamphlet observes, that it was then also stated as a grievance that they had no more a council in Scotland. In justice he should

should have remarked, that it was left in the power of the parliament of Great Britain to continue or set it aside. It would be hard indeed, if in the history of a noble heart, every unfortunate action, which passion, thoughtlessness, or inebriety gave rise to, were to be considered as studied malevolence; and the unintended, unforeseen consequences of one single deviation from the strictest virtue, attributed to the most vicious propensities. So in the history of a great and generous nation like Great Britain—ever active in the cause of freedom, ever strenuous to promote it—it would be absurd indeed, to ascribe some particular instances of oppression, as a constitutional failing.—Party politics may countenance many disorders, the constitution disowns them; and when weighed in her ballance the hand of time has ever rectified them. Let the stream of British politics be at any time ever so muddy, it is fed by springs, too numerous and too pure, to endanger its channel being choaked, and the bark on which

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our fortunes are entrusted, stranded and ingulphed. Whilst the sun of the greater nations of Europe seems setting, ours is yet in its meridian glory—Let us be true to ourselves, and united we may brave the world.

As I have before observed, this illeberal barrister has contended, without bringing any argument to his support, that the Union has been prejudicial to Scotland; and that in the natural progress of civilization throughout Europe, that country might possibly have been raised to a far more prosperous state than it is at present. It possibly might—What restrictions, what circumstances have prevented it? Here my Author is silent—he has looked backward indeed, to some purpose, and with equal effect, I doubt not has he searched into the depth of futurity, when he forebodes the most dismal effects from a Union, to the Irish nation. If the effects are such as Scotland has experienced, she has little reason

to fear them. To those who are acquainted with that country I have no wish to speak, let me advise those who are ignorant of it, to consult some other author than that gentleman whose illiberal abuse sets him beneath contempt, and who will but find supporters amongst those, who derive their intelligence, from sources equally ridiculous. Let me ask this intelligent gentleman—did he ever see Scotland?—I suspect not—his knowledge and travels seem to be equally circumscribed; and bigotted as he seems to opinions, which have their foundation only in ignorance, it would perhaps be absurd in me to inform him, that Scotland has not yet departed from her reputation in learning; her extensive acquirements in agriculture, argue most feelingly with those, who examining the face of the country, are capable of calculating her resources in this respect, and the daily advancement made by her towards perfection.—Her encreasing commerce speaks for itself; out of what has Glasgow, Paisley, Greenock,

Greenock, &c. arisen? Edinburgh it is said has remained stationary.—Indeed!—How old is the new town of Edinburgh?—or if that is no sign of its advancement in commerce—why should there have been lately a necessity for an act of Parliament for enlarging the harbour of Leith? A necessity long acknowledged, before that ever the act was introduced, to the British House of legislature. But Scotland it is said, by the Union, was deprived of a very advantageous trade with France.—Once for all let me remark to those carpers, who consider argument as proof; that England could at any time restrict the trade of Scotland;—and from the relative situation of the countries, reduce it to nothing. And is it from France Scotland was to derive its advantageous trade? If so, Scotland must, during almost the whole of this century, have been at war with England, to have profited by such a commerce. What then must have been its situation?—A brave, a hardy independent nation!—But poor, uncultivated, and cherishing

cherishing in inaccessible mountains, a liberty that all the power of Edward the 1st never could fetter.

The settlement of the Scots at the Isthmus of Darien, is intruded as a strong example of the spirit of enterprise in the Scottish nation before the Union—a spirit in all likelihood to encrease; the author, however, when first adverting to the circumstance, has forgot to mention, that it was owing to the jealousy of the English government, that this design was frustrated;—a jealousy which inimical and destructive as it was in this instance, it may with confidence be said, that in every other enterprise of the kind, it would have interfered with equal success. I have never denied the ambition of Scotland to become a flourishing nation. I have merely attempted to prove that its situation, added to the jealousy of England, must have ever prevented her from acquiring that success in commercial enterprises, that affluence as a nation, which, prior to

a Union with her ancient enemy, she had not the smallest pretensions to.

In the prosecution of systems, where, either a radical reform, or such a change is attempted, as militates against former precedents,—it is contradictory to the history of mankind to expect, that the most upright measures alone will be resorted to, to effect the object in view.—But to cry down the principal, because the methods adopted may appear partly unjustifiable, none but ignorance itself will attempt.—We are all eager to acknowledge the blessings we enjoy, as members of the Protestant Communion.—We can now at a distance trace the gradual expansion, of the human mind, under its auspices;—freed from the bigotry of persecution, unfettered by systems which left hardly the liberty of thought.—Yet look back, and scan the progress of that reformation, particularly in Great Britain.

—It

—It grew up thro' a complication of such crimes, as might be almost supposed to marr the very foundation of public virtue, —of public faith.—But inauspicious as were its first auspices,—time softened its features,—and with exultation, do we now recur to it, as the dearest pledge we enjoy, of that liberty, so often sealed by the blood of our ancestors.—

What therefore would be thought of that man, who would now venture to defame the reformation, because the characters of some of our first reformers, militated against every principle of society?—Would he not be told, to look to the reformation itself, as the best apology for its supporters?—Why then should I go further?—Let those petulant critics, who pretend to decry the character of a nation, (whose merits they are so ill qualified to establish) from the conduct of some individuals, instrumental in bringing forward their Union with England,—look up to those

those blessings, which both countries acknowledge from such a measure, as their surest guide to criticism;—should they wish to rest that criticism upon the broad basis of public utility!

I must confess myself at a loss to follow the gentlemen lately referred to through many of their arguments. In speaking of the rebellion in Scotland, it is remarked by the author of the pamphlet, entitled “Reasons against the Union,” that it is clear, that from these instances, the Scots were tinctured with French principles for a generation after the Union. This, God knows, is as unfounded an argument as could be well advanced. I have already spoke to the subject. The Scots were indeed attached to the family of Stewart, as the heirs of their ancient monarchy:—but from such a predilection the author of the pamphlet above alluded to, might as well have argued, that they were attached to the Catholic religion, as
to

to the Court of France. And does this gentleman pretend to say, that from Great Britain, Ireland drew the venom which hath tinctured her principles, with what I may justly style the blasphemies of the French revolution?—Impudent assertion! In the bosom of Ireland has long been nurtured those seeds of rebellion, which, to the ruin of thousands, burst forth at last; a rebellion originating partly from an oppression exercised by themselves—partly from the most execrable treasons that ever were planned. Where were the risings in either England or Scotland?—Fools and desperadoes may be any where found:—but the people were too wise, and too honest, to place either their happiness or fortunes, at the mercy of unprincipled villains.

It is from this consideration, chiefly that Ireland should look up to a Union with England, as the source of her future prosperity. It is this consideration which may prompt England at this moment, to propose

pose a Union with Ireland, as a bulwark to her own security—for the safety of both realms.

But it is said, that the relative situation and circumstances of Ireland, with England, are so materially different with these of Scotland, at the time of the Union, that no argument brought forward, to favour the Union of Great Britain, can possibly apply in this instance. In some points it may be so. There is not here the same apprehension at present, as there was prevalent in Scotland, that the Crown of the two realms should be separated. Yet even that might be disputed by those, who, studying what might have been the effects of the late rebellion, had it been successful; perhaps wisely consider, a Union, as the most effectual bar to any such attempts in future.—There are not here the same grounds for apprehension, which had the family of Stuart gained possession of the Scottish throne, at some future period, might have
refuted

resulted to that country, viz. that the Roman Catholic religion, might first have found a protector and afterwards an establishment:—Yet those who calculate upon the power of the Roman Catholics in this country, and the advantages they would naturally have reaped, had the late desperate measures been successful; may possibly consider, that the Protestant interest of Ireland, can look for certain protection nowhere, but in a Union.—Ireland indeed has a more successful commerce, than Scotland enjoyed previous to the Union:—Yet, that a Union would bring an incalculable increase of commerce to this country, is self-evident to every one, those excepted, who are wilfully blind.—There are indeed some contented souls in this country, who disdaining an obligation, and ignorant at the same time how to requite it,—wish Ireland to trust to its own perseverance, and prognosticate a success equal to their most ardent expectations.—To these I could almost say “my honest friends, you are already
“ so

“ so much obliged to England, that to at-
 “ tempt at remuneration, is upon your
 “ part impossible, upon ours, unwished
 “ for; the most thankless indeed, are
 “ sometimes those, who, like you, are
 “ glutted by a prosperity, they have reaped
 “ from friends, whom they can ne-
 “ ver expect to repay. Accept however
 “ still these kindnesses, which have help-
 “ ed to raise you to so prosperous a situati-
 “ on;—nor from an unjustifiable pride, re-
 “ ject that assistance, which hath so often
 “ supported you, and call down upon your
 “ heads at some future period, the
 “ curses of your children.” But it is ar-
 gued by one of its opposers, that from the
 situation of Ireland, God Almighty ne-
 ver intended such a circumstance should
 take place as a Union of Great Britain
 and Ireland. Perhaps this gentleman
 reasons from revelation!—if so—what a
 pity for both kingdoms, that the Omni-
 potent had not consulted him in the busi-
 ness; we might then have hoped, his pa-
 triotism

triotism and foresight, could have effected what now there is so absolute a bar put to. This hypercritic recollects me of Sir Godfrey Kneller's answer to Pope, when remarking to him, how much more perfect the world would have been, had the Almighty had his assistance.—“ 'Fore God “ Sir” replied Kneller, “ I believe so,”— Yet after all, I should suspect his arguments are drawn from a source of intelligence, at which we have all an equal means to arrive at. But I must confess, I can observe nothing in the situation of Ireland as to Great Britain which bars such a prospect. I can figure each of them in turns—mutual bulwarks to the other.—I see deficiencies in the situation of each, which each can supply.—I can at least flatter myself, that in the mind of every honest man, confidence from mutual benefits, will succeed to jealousy;—enough in itself at any time, to double the strength of a country.

With those who must be miserable, should they have no opportunity of disclaiming :—with those to whom right or wrong are equally acceptable, with whom, self-interest or the gratification of party spirit, is the most material consideration ; it is alike indifferent what arguments they bring forward to advance their purpose. The veil of sophistry may either totally conceal their fallacious tendency, or cast a shade on their imperfections. Party publications may in general excuse such a reflection ; nor do I think that the spirit of some of these lately ushered into the world, upon the present question, will make me blush for the censure. Look to those which are written directly against the Union, and which, in place of treating the subject in a candid, liberal manner condemn it in toto, and can find no argument possibly to justify it.—To believe them, the ruin of Ireland is as certain, as that the sea surrounds it ; nor do I doubt, but that such patriotic sentiments, will gain many votaries amongst those
who

who never yet thought for themselves. De Lolme, speaking of the trade of Ireland in the year 1780, makes an observation somewhat of a similar tendency; that, "the restraints
 " on it, though detrimental, were not of
 " that calamitous nature, which was re-
 " presented by political speakers, even in
 " the British Parliament, at the time we
 " are speaking of, or which was no doubt
 " believed by many individuals in Ireland."

—This remark I hope will justify me.—

These boisterous demagogues take hold of a popular subject, to wrest it for their own purposes; let the peel be ever so bitter, there will be found fools to swallow it;—passion too often blinds the human mind; nor is it, until after circumstances have occurred, which lead to more temperate consideration, that they take time to curse the fiend that has blinded their judgement.

I now bid adieu to a subject, which perhaps in the opinion of most, it might have
 " been

been better, had I not intermeddled with. However inconclusive my arguments may be esteemed, my intentions at least have been good; and most fortunate shall I esteem myself, whatever criticism may attach to these pages, should I prevail upon others, whose pretensions and abilities deservedly bear superior weight with the public; to expose those arguments which, under the mask of patriotism, the opposers of the Union have but brought forward, to cover purposes, selfish at best, perhaps of a more vicious tendency.—With pride then should every lover of his country behold in that Union, the bulwark of their constitution:—the torch which shall guide them, through their present maze of distraction:—a mine whose treasures ages shall not exhaust;—and a barrier against those outrages, which threaten to bring back this kingdom to the age of Gothic barbarity.



FINIS.